

## Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum

Brief Description | Recognition | Program IOM | Intervention Type | Content Focus | Protective Factors  
Risk Factors | Interventions by Domain | Key Program Approaches | Outcomes | Evaluation Design  
Delivery Specifications | Intended Setting | Fidelity | Barriers and Problems | Personnel | Education  
Personnel Training | Cost | Intended Age Group | Intended Population | Gender Focus  
Replication Information | Contact Information

*Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.*

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Second Step is a classroom-based social skills program for children 4 to 14 years of age. It provides a series of curriculum kits that teach social-emotional skills to reduce impulsive and aggressive behavior in children and to increase their level of social competence. It is developmentally and age appropriate and teaches, models, practices, and reinforces skills in empathy, impulse control, problem solving, and anger management.

### PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Second Step was developed in the mid-1980s by Committee for Children, a not-for-profit organization of educators and mental health professionals. Previous work provided training for teachers and parents regarding sexual abuse prevention and reporting. CFC program *Talking about Touching* taught personal safety skills to children. In 1985, the organization's mission broadened to include children's aggressive and high-risk behaviors. A development team led by Kathy Beland, M.A., worked to translate scientific research into a school-friendly program with a positive focus—Second Step.

Phillip Kendall's work on cognitive-behavioral interventions formed the backbone of the new program. This was integrated with techniques derived from social learning theory (Bandura), empathy research (Feshbach; Eisenberg), social information-processing models (Dodge), and Spivak and Shure's work on problem solving. Educators appreciated the easy-to-use format and scientific base. In 2002, Second Step was revised with updated lessons and materials and more videotapes were added.

### RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

U.S. Department of Education: Exemplary Program

Drug Strategies, Inc.: Rated "A" Program



## **INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)**

### **UNIVERSAL**

Developed for universal audiences.

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## **INTERVENTION TYPE**

### **SCHOOL-BASED**

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## **CONTENT FOCUS**

ANTISOCIAL/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, VIOLENCE, DOES NOT SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS SUBSTANCES

This program targets violence and social-emotional skill deficits, which are risk factors for substance use and abuse.

### **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE**

Youth learn empathy—how to identify and understand their own emotions and those of others and how to evaluate behavioral consequences in terms of fairness, safety, and impact on others.

### **VIOLENCE**

Youth learn impulse control, problem solving, and anger management.

### **Parents are involved as an adjunct strategy:**

The program includes an optional component, A Family Guide to Second Step: Parenting Strategies for a Safer Tomorrow. This is a video-based parent program designed to help parents of children preschool through grade five apply prosocial skills to parenting situations. It familiarizes parents with the curriculum, assists them with reinforcing the skills at home, and gives families the skills to communicate feelings, solve problems, control anger, and deal with conflict.

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## **PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

### **INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY, PEER, SCHOOL**

#### **INDIVIDUAL**

- Social competence
- Empathy
- Social problem-solving skills
- Emotion regulation
- Risk assessment and decisionmaking
- Goal setting

#### FAMILY

- Increased parental support of social/personal skills development

#### PEER

- Quality peer relations

#### SCHOOL

- Positive classroom and school climate
  - School engagement
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### **RISK FACTORS**

#### INDIVIDUAL, PEER, SCHOOL

##### INDIVIDUAL

- Aggression
- High-risk behavior
- Impulse control

##### PEER

- Peer rejection
- Peer support for antisocial behavior

##### SCHOOL

- Disrupted learning environment
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### **INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN**

#### INDIVIDUAL, PEER, SCHOOL

##### INDIVIDUAL

- Life/social skills training

##### PEER

- Peer-resistance education

##### SCHOOL

- Classroom-based skills development
- Comprehensive school change programs including components to improve parent involvement, change classroom management and/or instructional style, and improve student participation and school bonding

## **KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES**

### **IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA, PARENT TRAINING, SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **IN-SCHOOL CURRICULA**

The curriculum is divided into two age groupings: preschool through fifth grade, and sixth through ninth grade. Within these, there are five teaching kits. At each grade level, the lessons build sequentially and address the areas of empathy, impulse control, and anger management in age and developmentally appropriate ways.

The preschool/elementary lessons format is a photo-lesson card. The teacher shows the photograph depicting an interpersonal situation on one side to the class and follows the lesson outline on the other side. Videos model effective use of social skills by students at grade level. Teaching techniques include discussion, teacher modeling of the skills, and role-plays. Affective, behavioral, and cognitive skills are developed at every level of the curriculum. The middle school curriculum includes three levels, each of which uses discussion, role-play lessons, homework, and a video.

#### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

The program focuses on social-emotional skills, including empathy, impulse control, and problem solving and anger management.

#### **PARENT TRAINING**

The program for the preschool through fifth grade students includes a video-based parent program designed to help parents of children, preschool through grade five, apply prosocial skills to parenting situations. It familiarizes parents with the curriculum, assists them with reinforcing the skills at home, and gives families the skills to communicate feelings, solve problems, control anger, and deal with conflict.

#### **Typical problems users experience in implementing these program strategies and potential solutions:**

Typical roadblocks to full implementation include the lack of available classroom instruction time and teacher training time.

#### **HOW IT WORKS:**

Second Step lessons are based on interpersonal situations depicted in 11- by 17-inch black-and-white photos and/or videos. The accompanying scripted lesson guides the class discussion and skill practice. Teachers model the skills and children practice them. The pre-K level curriculum includes puppet scripts and sing-along tapes. The middle school/junior high curriculum includes homework assignments.

All lessons recommend ways to transfer skills to the classroom and practice and reinforce them during regular school activities. To promote transfer of learning, posters listing anger management and problem-solving steps are provided. In addition, the curricula for preschool through fifth grade contain a parent education video designed to orient families to the Second Step program.

The Second Step program kits contain everything teachers need to present the program to students. Guides and resources that support a school-wide implementation are provided to administrators. Between 20 and 25 lessons per year are provided for elementary grades. The middle/junior high school curriculum includes 15 lessons in year 1 and 8 lessons in years 2 and 3. The developmentally appropriate lessons build sequentially within and between each grade level, and should be taught in order.

To obtain the best possible outcomes, it is strongly recommended that all school staff be trained in the program. The options are a 1-day staff and teacher training, and a 3-day training of trainers. Ongoing program implementation support is available free of charge by phone. The developer also provides free printed materials to help with program selection, implementation, and on-site evaluation, and a quarterly client newsletter.

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## **OUTCOMES**

### **REDUCTIONS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO RISK FACTORS, IMPROVEMENTS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO PROTECTIVE FACTORS, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES**

#### **REDUCTIONS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO RISK FACTORS**

20% reduction in physical aggression during lunchtime and recess (control group increased 41%).

36% less aggressive behavior during conflict-arousing situations.

Decreased discipline referrals

Decreased weapons offenses

#### **Preschool-kindergarten**

- Decreased verbal aggression, disruptive behavior, and physical aggression

#### **Elementary school**

- Decreased aggression on the play-ground and in conflict situations
- Decreased need for adult intervention

#### **Middle and junior high school**

- Less approval for physical, verbal, and relational aggression

#### **IMPROVEMENTS IN BEHAVIORS RELATED TO PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

10% increase in social behavior during lunchtime and recess.

37% more likely to choose positive social goals.

#### **Preschool-kindergarten**

- Improved empathy skills and consequential thinking skills

### Elementary school

- More prosocial goal-setting
- Increased social competence and positive social behavior
- Higher levels of empathic behavior in conflict situations (girls)

### Middle and junior high school

- Increased confidence in their ability to regulate emotions and problem-solve
- Improved ability to perform social-emotional skills

### OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

41% reduction in the need for adult intervention during conflicts

Decreases disciplinary referrals

Increases positive goal-setting

Increases social competence and positive social interaction

Decreases approval of physical aggression, verbal hostility, and social exclusion

Provides practice in peer pressure resistance skills

Increases risk-assessment and decisionmaking ability

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## EVALUATION DESIGN

At least a dozen evaluations have been conducted on Second Step, by itself or in conjunction with complementary programs (e.g., literacy programs, B.E.S.T.). Among those focusing on only Second Step are:

A randomized pre- and posttest comparison of 790 elementary school children in experimental and control schools. Observers, blind to school condition, made systematic observations of aggressive and positive social behaviors in class and on school playgrounds. Teachers rated student social competence and antisocial behavior.

A study of more than 800 second- and fourth-grade students for 2 years compared experimental and control students on measures of social competence, antisocial behavior, and social beliefs. Observers, blind to school condition, counted aggressive and collaborative behaviors in conflict situations.

A pre- and posttest comparison of behavior and knowledge was conducted with a sample of inner-city African-American preschool and kindergarten children. Observers, blind to condition, measured disruptive and aggressive behaviors. Interviewers assessed children's social skills knowledge.

Middle/junior high school students in intervention and non-intervention classrooms were compared for pre- to posttest changes in social skills knowledge, approval of aggression, and perceived ability to manage emotions and perform social skills.

## **DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS**

### **3–6 YEARS**

Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

Preschool to fifth grade: 20 to 23 lessons per year, varying in length from 20 minutes for the youngest children to 45 minutes for upper level.

Middle school: 15 lessons in Level I and 8 lessons each in Levels II and III. Lessons are 55 minutes in length.

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## **INTENDED SETTING**

### **RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN**

Developed for use in rural, urban, and suburban settings.

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## **FIDELITY**

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes cited by the developer:

Teachers should be the primary presenters of classroom lessons.

Second Step skills and behaviors should be reinforced schoolwide by all staff members. If it is not possible to implement the program schoolwide, then at least two teachers should be involved so they can compare their situations.

All staff should be adequately trained in using the curriculum.

A system for ongoing implementation support should be in place within each school.

**Optional components or strategies and how they were determined to be optional:**

The Second Step Family Guide, consisting of six video-based, facilitator-led sessions for parents, is an optional component. Effective outcomes are shown without implementing this component; however, parents and educators find that the involvement of families improves communication between home and school and helps parents understand and employ the same skills with children at home.

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## **PERSONNEL**

### **FULL TIME, PART TIME**

Trained teachers should be available to teach the materials.

**Typical personnel problems encountered by users when implementing this Model Program and potential solutions:**

**Problem:** Teachers may be resistant to teaching the program.

**Solution:** Including teachers in the review and decisionmaking process when choosing a program is often helpful in creating buy-in. Emphasizing the benefits to classroom climate and student-teacher relationships is also helpful in motivating teachers to use the materials.

## EDUCATION

### UNDERGRADUATE

Minimum education requirement is an undergraduate degree.

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## PERSONNEL TRAINING

Type: SEMINAR/WORKBOOK, Location: ONSITE (user)/OFFSITE (developer or trainer location)

Teachers should be trained by persons who have attended the Training for Trainers for Second Step.

An initial 1-day training or two or three after-school training sessions present an overview of the program background and goals and provide lesson demonstration and practice opportunities. Teachers then practice in the classroom, using the curriculum materials and Teacher's Guide. After they experience teaching for a while, teachers meet to discuss their experiences.

Committee for Children's Client Support Services staff is available to consult with any site implementing the program to achieve optimal implementation. In addition, Committee for Children provides a Web site containing implementation resources, including client Web forums for peer support among implementation sites and prevention update newsletter articles. Consultation includes planning for effective implementation and training, assisting principals in providing leadership for schoolwide implementation, site-based program evaluation, and ongoing implementation support.

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## COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$1,001–5,000

Cost considerations for implementing this program as recommended by the developer:

A typical K–5 elementary school containing two classrooms per grade level will spend between \$900 and \$1,800 on curriculum materials (due to reduced pricing for purchasing curriculum materials in combination) and approximately \$500 in training expenses.

### TRAINING

Regional Training for Trainers (3 days): . . . . .	\$499 per participant for (Trainer's Manual and staff training videos are included; the Second Step curriculum materials are not included)
Regional Staff Training (1 day) . . . . .	\$169 per participant for (Second Step curriculum not included)
Second Step Family Guide Facilitatory Training . . . . .	\$169 per participant for (Family Guide manual not included)



## MATERIALS

Preschool Kindergarten Kit (ages 4–6) . . . . .	\$279
Individual grade level kits for grades 1–5 . . . . .	\$139 each
Level 1 Foundation Lessons (Middle School) . . . . .	\$295
Level 2 Skill Building Lessons (Middle School) . . . . .	\$125
Level 3 Skill Building Lessons (Middle School) . . . . .	\$125
Second Step Family Guide Manual and Parent Education Videos . . . . .	\$395

Basic program materials include:

- Administrator’s and Teacher’s Guides
- Photo cards with scripted lesson on reverse side (preschool to fifth grade)
- Classroom videotape
- Posters
- Parent education videotape and reproducible letters
- Sing-along tape (preschool)
- Puppets (preschool)
- Overhead transparencies and reproducible homework sheets (secondary grades)

## OTHER MATERIALS AVAILABLE INCLUDE:

### Also available:

Segundo Paso, a Spanish supplement to grade level kits for Preschool through Grade 5.

Trainer’s Manual and Staff Training Videos for Preschool through Grade 9 educators.

## Typical cost issues encountered by users when implementing this Model Program and potential solutions:

Participant schools regularly share curriculum kits between two classrooms.

Lower prices are available for purchasing Pre-K to grade 5 materials together, for purchasing the Family Guide in combination with curriculum, and for purchasing Middle School components together.

Schools fund the purchase of Second Step materials and training with Federal Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities funds, CSAP grants, Title I grants, or through State and local resources (e.g., State character education funds).

Family Guide materials for presenting six workshops to parents

Segundo Paso, a Spanish-language version used in conjunction with the Second Step student materials.

## **INTENDED AGE GROUP**

EARLY CHILDHOOD (0–4), CHILDHOOD (5–11), EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14)

Developed for children and youth in kindergarten, elementary, and middle school, 4 to 14 years of age.

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## **INTENDED POPULATION**

AFRICAN AMERICAN, HISPANIC/LATINO, WHITE

Second Step has been implemented in settings composed of primarily African American, primarily Hispanic/Latino, and primarily White students. Replications have been effected across a wide variety of socioeconomic indicators.

Developed for preschool through ninth-grade students (4 to 14 years old), the program's curriculum is intended for use with a broad population of students. Second Step has been proven effective in geographically diverse U.S. and Canadian cities, in classrooms varying in ethnic/racial makeup (predominantly African-American, predominantly White, or highly racially mixed), and in schools with students of varied socioeconomic status. Second Step is widely used in the United States and Canada, and has been adapted for use in several other countries. Spanish-language supplements are available.

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## **GENDER FOCUS**

BOTH GENDERS

Developed for both male and female students.

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## **REPLICATION INFORMATION**

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

#### Committee for Children

Committee for Children is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to promote the safety, well-being, and social development of children, by creating quality educational programs for educators, families, and communities. The organization develops social-emotional learning curricula for children—programs include *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum* (teaches social-emotional skills), *Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum* (teaches sexual abuse prevention skills), and *Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program*. Committee for Children provides program implementation training and support for these programs.

### FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT

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